

Town Meeting Coordinating Committee Meeting
Minutes from Sept. 11, 1008

1. Call to Order: This meeting began at 6:30pm. All members were present: Harry Brooks, Nonny Burack, Carol Gray, Peggy Roberts, Judy Simpson, Mary Streeter and Aaron Hayden.

2. Minutes: Nonny moved, and Harry seconded, to adopt the August 22, 2008 minutes with edits provided by members.

3. Miscellaneous:

a) League of Women Voters Voter Registration Table: Peggy circulated a flyer that was provided to the League entitled "Every voter Registered in Amherst is eligible to be a Town Meeting Member". Nonny had gone on Saturday to try to give copies of the flyer to the League for tabling, but no League volunteers were there that day. The flyers were passed on to the League later.

b) Posting minutes to the list-serve: Peggy said the posting of minutes was up in the air because of the new list-serve. Mary said Kris Pacunas said she could post minutes herself. Peggy said she had all items that had previously been posted and can pass that along to Mary for posting. Mary said she also had the ability to scan items for posting. Carol said she noticed that some items from the Town Meeting page are not on the new Town website such as past tally votes. Mary will be meeting with Kris next week about posting items and will discuss this as well.

c) Isaac Ben Ezra asked to speak for 5 minutes on behalf of Community Choices: He asked for TMCC to sponsor a Community Choices forum for people to be able to give input to the Community Choices Committee. Peggy said TMCC's purpose was to prepare people for Town Meeting. Mary said last year the Finance Committee had a forum on the budget and almost nobody came. Carol said perhaps we could have a forum on this topic and on updates on the Master Plan & Comprehensive Planning Committee. Isaac said in his view this topic warrants a meeting just on this topic. Isaac said he had been working on this committee for a long time and doesn't think this is a half hour conversation. He encourages us to see this as an opportunity to provide leadership on important issues. Isaac wanted to have Community Choices set up the forum and TMCC would host it.

Community Choices has a number of public presentations, the first of which is October 2 at the Bangs Center. Isaac requested that we let him know by next Thursday morning whether TMCC is willing to partner with Community Choices on this issue. Peggy said Community Choices might want to sponsor one big meeting, partly because the month of October is packed and it's hard to find places to hold events. Mary pointed out that TMCC's mission was to be objective and give information to Town Meeting members, not advocate a particular perspective. Isaac said he wanted to let people know that this is not a public forum about an override and it would not be advocating. Isaac said this forum would also be on ACTV.

d) **Banner:** Harry said the price of a banner that could be hung over Pleasant St. to advertise Town Meeting was the same cost as in the past.

4. Request to Select Board for Special Municipal Employee Status: Peggy drafted a letter to the Select Board requesting Special Municipal Employee Status. Peggy said this took about 2 minutes because the Select Board pointed out that we have people on multiple committees so that would require Special Municipal Employee Status and it was granted.

5. 2008 Annual Town Report: Peggy wrote up a draft TMCC's Annual Town Report and circulated it to the committee. Aaron moved to amend, and Harry seconded a proposal to add that TMCC met with the Moderator of Town Meeting and had a very productive meeting. All were in favor of the amendment. Aaron then moved to accept the report. Harry seconded. All were in favor of this motion. It was brought up that TMCC still doesn't have a Select Board liaison. Mary mentioned she would be talking to Diana Stein anyway and could suggest to her that she be a liaison if she were willing to do this. Others were also in favor with this idea. Aaron said he wanted the concept to be that we need a liaison, or, at the very least, a contact person. Peggy will send a note to the Select Board requesting a liaison. Peggy pointed out that with Gail Weston leaving, there aren't so many people who understood TMCC's role. Carol asked for there to be some substance added to our request to the Select Board explaining why a liaison would be helpful (e.g., to help facilitate scheduling of the Warrant with TMCC's educational activities and to discuss suggestions from Town Meeting members regarding Select Board activities, such as the need to have Select Board recommendations to articles in a much more timely manner.)

6. Scheduling and Planning of Events Before Nov. 5 Special Town Meeting:

Peggy's letter to the Select Board: Peggy read the email she had sent to the Select Board regarding the time crunch that was being created by having the warrant come out so late. Her email expressed a plea to have the warrant come out one week earlier. The Town Manager reportedly circulated this request to those involved with Town Meeting. Peggy took the initiative to reserve October 23 at 7:30pm at the Middle School for the Warrant Review since dates and facilities are quickly getting booked up during October. Peggy told Gerry Weiss and Larry Shaffer that she had done this. She also suggested that if their schedule for the Warrant did not allow for Town Meeting members to have received the Warrant before October 23 that we have 40 copies of the Warrant at the Warrant Review. Peggy said it was still uncertain they would be able to move the warrant signing up by one week. Harry suggested that Town Meeting be put off by one week. Peggy explained that we had requested that earlier but that there was a concern about trying getting a number of sessions of Town Meetings in before Thanksgiving. Aaron said the five zoning articles he's seen are likely to be very complex. Peggy said the educational forum could be before the warrant review. Carol pointed out that when that happened in the past, the forum was not very well-attended and she thought that was because it was so early and people weren't even thinking of Town Meeting. Peggy

pointed out the problem of the elections happening right before the start of Town Meeting. Nonny said it was very important to move Town Meeting back by one week in order to give everyone some breathing space. It was pointed out that Candidates Night is October 29. Someone announced that on Monday, September 15, at 6pm in the Town Room there is a forum to educate people about the Open Meeting Law. The forum is after the Select Board meeting and is posted as a Select Board Meeting. Mary asked how many TMCC members would want to go to that meeting. At least three people said they planned to go so it was decided it should be posted as a TMCC meeting. Mary said she will call Kate Seaman to ask her to post the meeting.

Bus Tour: Mary moved, and Carol seconded, that we have the bus tour on Sunday, October 26, from 2-4pm.

TMCC Forum: Carol moved, and Mary seconded, that we have the TMCC informational forum on October 21, Tuesday, at 7pm at ACTV (with the alternate Town Hall, Town Room). The sense of the group was in favor of this idea. Carol moved that we have a joint forum to discuss the master plan and the community choices issues. Mary asked Aaron if there was something ready from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. Aaron said the Planning Board would be considering the Master Plan within the next few weeks. Aaron said the master plan had direct application to four of the warrant articles. Carol raised a concern about the need to avoid advocacy at the forum and to have the forum not pertain to specific articles. Carol withdrew her motion to include both topics.

Carol moved, and Aaron seconded that the forum deal with the Voices/Choices topic and allow for public input on this theme and that a TMCC subcommittee be set up to determine how that topic would be addressed. Aaron said he wanted for us to be clear that we support Isaac's idea that TMCC has a role in bringing Voices/Choices to Town Meeting members and this is how we would like to do it. The vote was six in favor and one opposed (Nonny). Nanny's concern was that the calendar was too crammed already and there shouldn't be a forum unless absolutely necessary for the business of Town Meeting. Aaron said what we can bring to this forum is what Town Meeting members can do in terms of input. Harry suggested we have the ability to do call-ins. Carol & Harry volunteered to be on a subcommittee for the forum and will recruit at least one other Town Meeting member to be on our subcommittee.

Precinct Meetings: Mary & Carol volunteered to put together precinct meetings. The window for precinct meetings was determined to be October 23-Nov. 4. Carol said we should aim to have precinct meetings locked in early enough to advertise this in the newspaper.

Warrant Review: Peggy and Judy will work on the Warrant Review with the League of Women Voters.

7. Adjournment: Mary moved, Aaron seconded, and we adjourned at 8:32pm.

Documents Distributed at the meeting:

1. Minutes from August 27, 2008.
2. Agenda for today's meeting,
3. Letter drafted by Peggy to the Select Board regarding Special Municipal Employee Status.
4. Draft of Town Meeting Coordinating Committee Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2008

Carol Gray, Secretary